



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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General Law
Public Testimony
Tuesday, March 11, 2014

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 5476 AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF THE FEASIBILITY OF LEGALIZING INDUSTRIAL HEMP.

Dear Senator Doyle, Representative Baram, Senator Witkos, Representative Carter, and esteemed members of the General Law Committee.

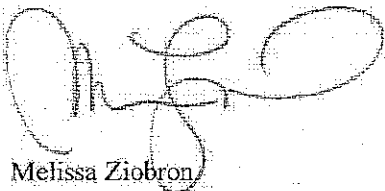
I submit this testimony in support of HOUSE BILL 5476 AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF THE
FEASIBILITY OF LEGALIZING INDUSTRIAL HEMP.

The use of hemp far predates the use of cotton or other materials. In fact the earliest known woven fabric was dates back to 7,000 BC. Up until the 1800's some estimate that 80% of all textiles and fabrics were made from hemp fibers. In ancient times it was used to create fabric, paper, and oil. So why do we have such an aversion to using this material? Simply put, it is misinformation that is stopping us from using this highly versatile sustainable resource. There are some who estimate that 25,000 items could be manufactured from hemp. Deforestation is occurring at around 3% per year, and hemp is a far superior resource since it can be grown to maturity in 100 days. These facts, along with the potential at creating thousands of US jobs should warrant the study from DECD that this bill proposes.

Since the war on drugs began many folks confuse hemp and marijuana. According to some of the research that I have done, hemp contains such a low level of THC that it would take many football fields of use, to render the same effect as marijuana. While the plant genus is the same—in fact if grown next to each other it would render the marijuana sterile. In addition, some additional research is warranted regarding the new Farm Bill which allows colleges and universities to start pilot programs for growing hemp. It appears to all the programs specifically in states where the industrialization and cultivation of the crop is legal. While it appears that 10 states fit this guideline, part of DECD due diligence should deal with the federal/state implications as well.

There is a growing demand for hemp products in the United States and the irony is that we cannot produce the raw material here to develop those from local businesses. Instead, they are imported from all over the world. This bill would investigate the feasibility of a product that has been around for thousands of years, that has proven to be more sustainable than even wood, is 100% versatile, and has a proven market. What are we waiting for?

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. Ziobron', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Melissa Ziobron
State Representative
34th District